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Transactions

of

The Chartered Surveyors' Institution

SESSION 1942–3.

AT THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Chartered Surveyors' Institution on Wednesday, 24th March, 1943.

Mr. W. C. FARNSWORTH (President) in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following new members were received by the President prior to the meeting and signed the Register :—

Professional Associates :

BOURNE, EARDLEY KENNETH
HEATH, GEOFFREY WILLIAM
REED, HENRY ROBERT
WOOTTON, DENNIS STOKES

A DISCUSSION took place on

THE REPORT OF THE SCOTT COMMITTEE ON LAND UTILIZATION IN RURAL AREAS.

The PRESIDENT, in opening the meeting, welcomed in particular Mr. Robert Cobb (Past President) who was a member of the Scott Committee.

It had been gratifying, the President continued, to hear the Prime Minister in his recent broadcast make special reference to agricultural matters. Some of the phrases used by Mr. Churchill seemed to indicate that he had read the Scott Report.

The recurrence of the phrase "a prosperous and progressive agriculture" in the Scott Report had impressed him, and he sincerely hoped that many of the recommendations would be carried out

at the appropriate time, since agriculture could not be brought to an efficient state unless some at least of them were implemented. The only thing which worried him was how they were to be paid for.

Opening papers were then read as follows by MR. J. A. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Professional Associate of Council) on "The Report as it Concerns the Agricultural Industry," and by MR. J. P. RHYS (Fellow, Special Diploma in Town Planning) on "The Location of Industry and Town Planning."

THE SCOTT REPORT AS IT CONCERNS THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

By J. A. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Professional Associate of Council).

As surveyors we approach the problem of the Scott Report as we approach so many problems of our profession—from different angles—some with the prejudice of urban and industrial interests, some as agriculturists, some as regional planners, many, perhaps, with the added zest of social reformers and all, I hope, as citizens.

There is already a body of criticism of the findings of the Scott Report, which sees in the Report an over-emphasis on the sanctity of agricultural land, but it must be remembered that this is the successor to the Barlow Report, which dealt with the distribution of industry and, by reason of its terms of reference, ignored to a large extent the claims of agricultural land. The Scott Report deals with that vital aspect of planning, and if there is a suggestion of over-emphasis on agricultural needs, it is in conformity with its terms of reference which spoke of "development consistent with the maintenance of agriculture," and its findings are surely a proper corrective if read in conjunction with the findings of the Barlow Report. I need scarcely remind members of the ever-increasing invasion (which amounted to 50,000 acres a year) of the farm lands of England in pre-war years by builders and Government departments.

In the evidence of the Council of the Institution to the Scott Committee and in the main postulates of the Report, there is stated the obvious but essential condition of reasonable prosperity in the industry, and for a long term policy, without which the 45 millions of our population will force the agricultural million to fight their losing battle again.

Whether the policy of our survival is to be based on a programme such as Pollitt's, which sets out to provide for the production of all our needs from our own lands—or whether it is to be based on wise supervision and the control of markets, on war agricultural executive committees and increased agricultural education—the need for an agreed policy is a first essential.

That the re-distribution of industry is necessary we do not question; new locations must be found, and suitable sites must be provided, and I think that there is a very real case for new satellite towns, and the siting of industry in suitable existing smaller urban centres.

Again, the Council's evidence urged that the Ministry of Agriculture should have some real control over the selection of land to be absorbed into

urban development, and the Report agrees, but there is already strong criticism of the proposal.

There is probably a large measure of agreement that in future zonings there should be a more general use of total reservation of agricultural and forest lands rather than the temporary zoning " that is so common in planning schemes to-day "—but the Report is not able to give any strong recommendation on this point.

I hope that in future planning legislation it will be possible to control the actions of speculators who have in the past withdrawn so much good agricultural land.

Another point upon which there is criticism relates to the problems of the infiltration of the townsman and the urban influence into the life and environment of the countryman, and it is easy to misconstrue the evidence of those who plead for a limitation of such fusion, on the grounds of different habits of life and outlook. Those of us whose lives are set in the country can appreciate the difficulties, and would probably agree that there are limits to the benefits of urban advantages and civilisation beyond which the ordinary man and woman in the countryside has no wish to follow ; and that there are many sides of rural life that we would wish to preserve, and so-called advantages of town life which we would wish to avoid.

The Report goes so far as to say that if the introduction of industry into the rural areas is carefully directed, some of the difficulties would be overcome.

The provision of better educational facilities, of better health services and of amenities such as transport, not now available to the rural population, are included in the wise proposals in the Report, while secure wages and labour conditions are as necessary as a sound agricultural policy in preserving contentment in the country, and in encouraging men to stay on the land.

As I see it, the wisdom of the Report lies in its desire to bring about the spread of industry and domestic housing—not by any rigid segregation of townsmen and countrymen, but by careful location of factory and home, recognising always that the rural and the urban standards have their own values, and that it is better to aim at the improvement of rural standards in the countryside than to raise them by an inoculation of urban benefits. At the same time the Report envisages the planning for a redistribution of industry and housing by the encouragement of development in selected centres and in suitably sited new townships, rather than by the grafting of industry upon the country villages and urban districts.

As to the social and physical amenities of the countryside, so much that is contained under that heading in the Report confirms the Institution's evidence, and amplifies it—the need for improved public services, light, power, water, transport, the provision of town and village community centres, the improvement of inns, the preservation of rights of way, and the provision of playing fields and opportunities for recreation. With this must go the establishment of well-planned dormitory areas near the towns, and the encouragement of camping sites and hostels.

Lastly, the housing problem—perhaps the greatest need of all and a

problem which has never been seriously tackled on wise lines in the past—and while agreeing with most of the recommendations in the Report, I could have wished that the terms of reference had justified the Committee in proposing the basis for some national scheme for the provision of a sufficiency of good houses at economic rents, without the overshadowing dangers of excessive rateable assessments—houses wisely designed for the folk who live and work on the land at rents which they can pay.

We all know the results of past housing drives in the country—the Council houses—which sooner or later are occupied in the main by families other than those of agricultural workers—their unsuitability—their design often the product of some unskilled District Council Surveyor. How many of us could point to parishes where the housing shortage is acute, but resulting almost entirely from the lack of small houses suitable for pensioners, old people, and widows.

I wish that the Report could have dealt more fully with this side of the problem, for it is a very real one, and I trust that the Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Committee under Lord Dudley's Chairmanship will presently give a lead in this direction.

THE SCOTT REPORT: LOCATION OF INDUSTRY AND TOWN PLANNING.

By J. P. RHYS (Fellow—Special Diploma in Town Planning).

Collaboration between Ministries.

The Scott Committee's proposals for the formulation and execution of national planning comprise an organisation as follows :—

1. A standing committee of the Ministers concerned, with a non-departmental Minister of Cabinet rank as Chairman ;
2. Government Departments concerned with development ;
3. A Central Planning Commission ;
4. Such *ad hoc* bodies as may be needed to perform functions not already covered by existing Ministries or other authorities or bodies.

The idea behind this proposal is that the Minister of non-departmental rank should be a co-ordinator and a neutral, while much of the work of the suggested Central Planning Commission would be advisory and local authorities would continue their present functions subject to advice and guidance from the Commission. It is clear, I think, that the Committee hope by this means to avoid the overlapping, contention and delay which have characterised planning in the past.

Location of Industries.

The Committee recognise, as we all must do, that this country is predominantly industrial and, if you take Great Britain as a whole, is second only to Belgium in density of population, while if you take England as the unit, the density is greater than that of any other Western country. But more than one-third of the population of England and Wales lives in the six largest city groups, and over half lives in or near the fourteen chief urban

centres, while the 1931 census returns showed that over 80 per cent. of the population lived in urban areas. " We are the most urban nation in the world," concludes the Committee, but this is clearly the best of reasons for taking the greatest care how we treat our relatively small area of open country.

Two wars in the space of a generation have shown us that it is far more than a playground for townspeople or, what is worse, a large piece of land on which to pitch anything that may suit the immediate needs of industry and housing.

The Committee courageously forecast what they consider will probably be the tendencies after the war, so far as they can guess. This forecast is worth considering. Briefly it is :

1. Increased spread of light industry round existing urban centres in the Midlands, and the South and South-east of England, coupled with further expansion of big population centres in these areas and the addition of larger concentric rings of housing and industry ;
2. Further decline of heavy industries, if pre-war trends are allowed to re-assert themselves, coupled with abandonment of more sites to become derelict ;
3. Possible continuance, as centres of peace-time industry, of factories established in country areas during the war leading to further sporadic building in rural surroundings ;
4. Increased facilities for holidays, walking tours, holiday camps, youth hostels, etc.

Summing up, the Committee think the countryside " can never be strong enough to hold on to its own " even when it is in the national interest for it to do so " unless suitable conditions are created and suitable machinery and powers provided," while a building boom worse in many respects (if you can so describe it) than that of the inter-war years will ensue.

The Committee's recommendations for dealing with the problems likely to arise are as follows :—

(*a*) *Mining and Extractive Industries.*

Those of us who have studied the Report of the Kennet Committee will be well acquainted with the effects of these industries, now perhaps more active and more devastating in their effects than ever before. The problem of dealing with devastated areas has long exercised the minds of those who are faced with it. The Scott Committee recognise that the location of these industries is determined by immutable physical conditions, but recommend that they should be subject to effective planning control, while " Legislation should be passed imposing an obligation on all those who derive benefit from the working of land for minerals to restore that land for agriculture or for afforestation or other purposes within a short specified time after the land has been worked out," while " Leave to prospect and develop minerals should be required and a deposit or security to cover the cost of restoration should be made." Derelict or decaying mining areas should be investigated with a view to their more productive utilization.

(*b*) *Immobile or Rooted Industries*, e.g., iron, steel, etc.

The immobility of these is recognised by the Committee, but they advise that the Central Planning Authority should commence as soon as possible a review of war factories, with the object of deciding what is to become of them.

(*c*) *Linked Industries*, i.e., those which feed parent industries, and form a link in the chain of production. These must remain in existing centres as they are inseparable from their parent industries.

(*d*) *Mobile Industries.*

These light industries, though theoretically mobile, are in practice often tied to limited localities. Where brought into rural areas they should be located in existing new or small towns rather than in the countryside or in villages.

(*e*) *Public Utility Undertakings.*

These must sometimes locate production and storage units in the open country or in villages. but they should be subject to strict planning control. In another part of their Report the Committee

advocate provision in planning schemes for the wayleaves required by these undertakings. It is not so very long ago that the grid system laid out by the Central Electricity Board was giving many of us cause for serious thought, but whether "strict planning control" would have assisted us much is another question.

(*f*) *Rural Trades and Crafts and Trades catering for day to day needs of the Population.*

Such trades should find a place in small towns or villages, and rural trades and crafts should be encouraged.

(*g*) *Noxious Industries.*

Location of these should be subject to stringent control.

Generally, the Committee recognise therefore the rather narrow limits within which it is possible to influence the location of industry, and with it, the location of the places within which the workers live, but they draw attention to one very important point, namely, the full utilisation of vacant or derelict areas in towns before establishing new industrial centres in the country areas. Also, they recognise the difficulty of finding part-time or seasonal employment for agricultural workers and their families. On balance, they consider that the introduction of carefully regulated industry into the towns of country areas would be beneficial.

Siting of Houses.

We all recognise that houses must be built where they will be conveniently placed for the workers who will occupy them, but we should not lose sight of the fact that location of industry is seriously influenced by location of industrial population. A large centre of population provides an industrialist with a pool of diversified labour and it is much more difficult than one would expect to create a new population centre for a dispersed industry. People tend to be conservative and I think it is no exaggeration to say that generally they expect work to be brought to them rather than to move to take up work. The shortage of housing accommodation since 1914, a shortage which seems to grow worse rather than better, has also much to do with this.

However, for such movements as may take place, and particularly with a view to controlling existing trends, the Committee makes the following recommendations:—

(*a*) New satellite towns, housing estates, garden cities and suburbs should be sited wherever practicable away from the better farm land, and the Minister of Agriculture should be consulted from the start of any proposals;

(*b*) Sporadic building in villages and rural areas should be controlled, and planning schemes designed so as to direct all new settlers into country towns and villages except where they can give a decisive reason why they should be allowed to settle in the open country;

(*c*) All new villages and country towns should be situated away from main traffic roads though with easy access to them, and all existing villages and country towns which have main traffic routes passing through them should be by-passed as far as possible;

(*d*) New villages and extensions of villages should be planned and should as far as possible be compact, while no attempt should be made to recreate in new villages the irregularity and quaintness of old ones.

Perhaps I may comment here that 44·2 per cent. of the land of England and Wales has been classified by Dr. Stamp, the Vice-Chairman of the Scott Committee, as Better Farmland, 38·0 per cent. as Medium, and 16·0 per cent. as Poor Land, but only 4·8 per cent. of the Better Farmland is classified in the Scott Report as First Class Arable. These figures are pertinent when

you are considering either the extension of an existing town or the siting of a new one.

Roads and Railways.

The Committee, in common with many of us who have been concerned with planning, advise that there should be closer collaboration between the planning, highway and agricultural authorities as to construction of roads. There should be bold planning of new trunk highways instead of continued tinkering with local widenings, and the new highways should be so planned as to avoid villages and towns. As to railways, the Committee make a recommendation which is likely to excite great attention among railwaymen, this being that exemption of railway undertakings from planning control should cease. This exemption is partial only, even at present. Railway level crossings on important roads should be eliminated and many old bridges should be rebuilt. This, of course, is only a continuance of a process which was fairly well under way some years since.

Aerodromes and Defence Works.

The Committee comment rightly that much good agricultural land has been used up by aerodromes and they hope this will be unnecessary in future. The whole question of Service aerodromes depends, of course, upon the international situation after the war and, maybe, for many years after that, but at any rate the Committee approve the present system of consultation between the responsible Departments under the guidance of the Central Planning Authority, and if some Service aerodromes can be disposed of after the war, the question of alternative uses should be settled by that Authority and in consultation with the other Departments concerned ; it should not be left to the Service Departments to settle alone. Defence works of a temporary character should be removed when the time comes, in pursuance of a plan which should be drawn up now by the Central Planning Authority.

Planning Control.

Generally, the Committee recommend that all land should be planned both nationally and locally, and that from the start of all planning schemes involving the use of agricultural land there should be the closest collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, who should agree every local planning scheme before it is approved by the Central Planning Authority. As far as possible, " tracts of good soil in the neighbourhood of towns and villages " should be kept for the dual purpose of open spaces and market gardens " and allotments " with security of tenure for allotment holders, while the area and boundaries of green belts should also be agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture. With the object of making the best use of land, " agricultural, " soil and land classification surveys should be made round each expanding " urban area," to which I think most of us will agree, perhaps with the qualification that the scope of these surveys should be that of the whole country.

Now as to specific items, the Committee advise :—

(a) *Residential Buildings.*

Designs for rural housing should be subject to approval of plans, elevations and materials by statutory panels of paid architects and others, who should be appointed for the purpose. There have been such striking contrasts in recent building in the country between the cottages put up by local authorities, no less than the houses erected by private enterprise, and the results have so often been truly appalling that we all hope, I am sure, these recommendations will be adopted and with the results anticipated. The practice of building detached or semi-detached suburban villas in villages and, worse still, in the open country should never have been allowed, and should certainly not be permitted to continue. The Committee point out that while new buildings should utilise new materials and techniques, the buildings should harmonise with their surroundings. This is precisely the point that the Ministry of Health has been trying to drive home in the past, and in some cases with satisfactory results. Incidentally, the Committee point out that blocks are better than scattered detached units. I think this applies generally, but a good deal of the argument on one side and the other is the result of social considerations.

(b) *Other Buildings.*

All agricultural buildings should be brought under planning control and the same applies to all the wayside buildings which have sprung up since motoring became a universal occupation, and which have done so much to spoil and disfigure the countryside into which the proprietors of these buildings are anxious to attract their potential customers. Petrol stations should be controlled by planning, instead of by by-laws, as at present. Camps, which the Committee foresee will increase in number after the war, should also be strictly controlled.

(c) *Advertisements.*

The Committee recommend that there should be a licensing system exercised by the local authorities for the control of signs and advertisements, and this system should be national in character.

The Committee are dissatisfied with the present permissive building in the "Interim Development" period; their view is that nothing should be built without the consent of the local planning authority, subject to appeal in case of dispute.

Access to the Countryside.

The Committee recognise the probable extension of public demand for the countryside as a playground, and make carefully considered recommendations to keep it within reasonable bounds. Thus there should be proper access, but not so as to interfere with the proper use of the land, and there should be a publicity campaign to teach all parties concerned and, if this fails, stiffer penalties. I think farmers might be worth hearing on this point, but it is not for me to make a guess at their reactions. The local planning authority should be obliged to signpost and record on maps all undisputed rights of way and to try to reach agreement with owners as to disputed rights, and a small

Footpaths Commission should be set up to investigate disputes, give decisions and recommend opening of new paths and closing of old ones, with the Central Planning Authority behind it to make their decisions legal. As to upkeep, the local authority should be under a statutory obligation to supervise and keep up footpaths. Main " hikers' highways " should be recognised and a right of way for walkers provided round the whole coast-line, while a committee of interested bodies should evolve a formula for regulation of the use of rights of way.

As to national parks, the Committee recommend the setting up of a National Parks Authority to stake out national parks, while the Central Planning Authority should take steps, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, to record details of common lands, safeguard public rights of access and commoners' rights, investigate the upkeep of commons and, in conjunction with the appropriate scientific societies, stake out nature reserves and do what is necessary to effect reservation and control of them.

Local Planning.

The Committee consider that local planning should no longer be permissive ; it must be made obligatory and co-ordination must be made compulsory between neighbouring planning authorities. Local planning authorities should be made free from the restrictions in the zoning of agricultural land due to liability for compensation, and where they are carrying out their assigned part of a national plan the expense should not fall on their own financial resources. " When approved, local planning " schemes should be a complete code of enactments affecting both the " development of the land and the functions of the statutory authorities " within the area of the scheme." Lastly, the State should be able to acquire agricultural land compulsorily " where required in the interests of national " planning or of providing agricultural efficiency."

Rural Zoning.

The so-called " Rural Zone," applied since 1938, in the Committee's view, has improved the possibilities of reserving land for agricultural purposes, but it is not completely satisfactory and may lead to a very thinly spread suburbia in some parts of the country, not unlike the possible results of the open zoning of one house to five or more acres, which was adopted prior to 1938 to preserve agricultural land from untoward building development. The Committee is of opinion that the fear of claims for compensation has been the chief cause of weakness in zoning land against building and states that " The clear and " unequivocal reservation of agricultural land against possible building is " still a form of planning which exposes the planning authority to unpredictable " claims." Other causes of unsatisfactory planning are lack of power to prevent development during the " Interim Development " period, the desire of some local authorities to attract industry into their areas, failure of some local authorities to give effect to a carefully designed regional scheme including their areas, and the lack of a national plan.

I take it most members who are old enough to remember conditions before 1914 will probably remark that, after all, there was something about the ontrol of the great landowners over their own estates, now so often broken

up and held by individual farmers and speculators, which can never be replaced; and a good deal of what is being suggested now could have been avoided if the process of liquidating the great estates had never been allowed to commence, or at least to reach the proportions which it has done.

Discussion.

Mr. Humphrey Ryde (Honorary Secretary of the Institution), in opening the general discussion which followed the papers, referred to the suggestion that country villages should be provided with gas and electricity. That was very desirable. The Joint Council of Public Utility Undertakings had given evidence before the Scott Committee. He thought that no planning of the countryside should commence without the collaboration of that body, which could make a valuable contribution. It was possible that mains could run for long distances out to country villages only if the project were assisted by public funds; after the experience of this war he believed such a course would be found to be practicable.

The Report, he thought, contained an error in one matter affecting rating. It stated that evidence was given before it that in some cases private owners had been deterred from carrying out improvements or restoring rural houses through fear of increases in assessments without the possibility of an equivalent increase in rental, and that this called for consideration by the Government. His criticism was that if the improvements would not increase the rent, then they obviously would not increase the annual value, and consequently should not increase the assessment. The law provided a safeguard for that sort of position. In his experience, cottages belonging to big landowners were usually kept in a first-class condition.

Many recommendations in the Scott Report, especially those touching on æsthetics, appealed to him greatly, for instance, that dealing with public advertisement hoardings. He hoped that any regulations introduced to deal with advertisement hoardings would be strong enough to control the principal sinners, namely, the railway companies.

Mr. W. Bell (Fellow) said he had found, in discussing houses and farm buildings in the country, that everything seemed to come down to a question of finance. The farmer, when he wanted any work done, would stipulate that it must be completed at a certain cost, and the surveyor had to conform to that.

In dealing with small country houses just before the last war no subsidies were available, and one had to bear in mind that the countryman's wages at that time were approximately 15s. 0d. a week, so that houses had to be built to let at a rent of 3s. 0d. or 4s. 0d. a week. On the Duke of Bedford's estate, where he was working at that time, there were decent houses out of all proportion to the rent their occupiers paid, and they all knew the advantage of large estates in respect of amenities, which included not only houses of a fair standard, but amenities in respect of tree planting and the like.

To his mind, however the Scott Report and other similar reports were analysed, the whole matter came back to politics. Everything depended upon the policy of the Government. A population of 50,000 had been mentioned as a convenient one for a new town. He was sorry to hear that figure mentioned because when the population of a town reached 50,000 it clamoured to become a county borough. It would be well to make the figure something below 50,000 or very much above it. But what was the good of putting down all over Great Britain these new or satellite towns without regard to the most suitable location of industry and to natural sources of materials?

The position of this country in respect of world commerce had profoundly changed. Years ago Great Britain was supplying the world with manufactured goods. It turned from agriculture because of its great mining and manufacturing developments. But to-day the countries with which we had formerly traded were exploiting their own minerals and were increasing their own industrial development. Did this pressure for new and satellite towns mean that we should again be over-industrialized with consequent unemployment on a very wide scale ?

If a Central Planning Authority was to be set up why should there not also be a Central Agricultural Authority ? If this country were to be kept going, the maximum amount of land must be brought into development from the agricultural point of view, so that more people were brought back to the land than had previously been the case. He had personally tried to get men to work in agricultural districts, but some magnet always drew them back to the towns. He thought the only thing to do was to educate the children in such a way that they developed into true agriculturists. That was where a Central Agricultural Authority would be of value. Such a body would have the right to protest against the building of useless towns on proper agricultural land, and it would help to maintain a balance of power as between agriculture and other industries.

The question of water and electricity in the country required proper handling. In many cases electrical cables were carried across fields and yet in the farm-houses oil lamps were being burned. On approaching the electricity companies one was told at once that what they wanted was a transformer, that the power which was carried in the cables was some 33,000 volts and that what was required for the individual consumer was some 230 volts, and they asked who was to pay the cost of the transformer. Such a Central Agricultural Authority as he had in mind would ensure that electricity was supplied to the maximum number of farm-houses.

Another point to be noted was the number of small country gas works, manufacturing gas at a maximum price although electricity was run in the vicinity.

With regard to housing, a panel of architects had been suggested, but here again there was a snag. Formerly, houses were designed to secure the maximum comfort inside the house and a moderate appearance outside, but he feared some architects had sacrificed the inside comfort for the sake of the outside appearance. The people themselves liked maximum comfort in their houses, though design was very welcome when the price was reasonable.

All these problems were so large that it might be years after the war before they could really be settled. But some things could be settled even during the war. He recalled the former competition in petrol stations, but now the Government had insisted that petrol stations should be spaced at certain distances and properly designed and regulated. His own plea again was for a Central Agricultural Authority to hold the scales between the Central Planning Authority and agriculture.

Mr. K. E. B. Glenny (Fellow) said it had been stated that only one-fifth of the population of this country lived in rural areas and were interested in agriculture. The towns had little knowledge of agriculture or appreciation of its difficulties. The present time offered the opportunity to remedy that. Among the children compulsorily evacuated, a good many had developed a considerable interest in the countryside. Another tendency in the same direction was the Women's Land Army. No doubt many of the women would return to industrial life, but a number had become keenly interested in agriculture. If those two things could be combined it would surely be possible to develop a much greater interest in the countryside. The secret was to educate the children, and one way in which it might be done would be to institute a hostel scheme for urban children, so that in the holidays they could acquire an interest in the country-side. The new acquisition of the Nuffield Trust at Oxford was a case in point. If something on those lines could be made available to all urban children for two or three weeks at a time there would probably be no reason in future to talk of a lack of interest in agriculture.

With regard to electrical development, the rate of progress in rural areas had been exceedingly rapid since the last war, considering the area and number of places to cover. It had been for every supply authority to set before the Electricity Commission a four- or five-year plan of development for bringing

electricity into the villages and small towns. An intensification of that policy, which would involve Exchequer assistance, would bring electricity to every village in England, but the project would have to be subsidized for some years. He recalled the tremendous outcry about the disfiguring effect of the pylons which was made years ago. Yet they were things of real grace and beauty, and now that people had grown accustomed to them nothing more was said on the subject.

Mr. Rhys had referred to satellite towns. Was that a correct description of what the Scott Committee proposed? He had always understood that a satellite was something which revolved round a larger unit. Was it proposed to set up towns around the larger "conurbations"? Such a plan would intensify the transport difficulty and sterilize more agricultural land than ever.

As for new towns, who was to stimulate their promotion and start the industries to enable a town of 50,000 people to carry on? To give the necessary amount of employment would mean a tremendous amount of industrial development. It seemed to him that this could only be done either by the large industrial concerns, such as the Imperial Chemical Industries or Dunlops, or by the Government.

A further question arose: how were the armament factories, with the housing which had been provided for them, to be dealt with? Were these to be the nuclei of the new satellite towns?

Mr. W. B. Punchard (Professional Associate) said that Mr. Bell had told them how difficult it was to turn a townsman into an agriculturist. The converse, unfortunately, was easy: a countryman could be turned into a townsman with great facility. But he did not think that the answer was, as suggested by the last speaker, to be found in schemes promoted by urban authorities to persuade children to go into the country. No doubt the evacuation and the Women's Land Army had done much good, but the real trouble was that so many country school teachers were completely town-minded. They taught the children that their ambition should be to enter a factory or an office or a shop, and that only the dull-witted or slow children should descend to work on the land. What the answer was he did not know.

There was also the problem of how to keep men on outlying farms with no electricity or amenities, and which were a long way from villages, schools or shops. The position was being made worse also by the urbanisation of villages.

Mr. Ryde had mentioned the fear of increased assessments if houses were improved. He knew a few years ago of cases where cottages had been built on farms where the only rent which the owner could expect was 3s. a week, and the local authority had said that these were beautiful cottages and that it was quite impossible to accept 3s. a week as the basis of the assessment. How the dispute ended he did not know, but it had caused much discussion at the time. The position was now rather different in that the rent of 3s. a week could be increased, in theory at any rate. But the whole question of rents of rural cottages would have to be settled. At some time, he supposed, an amendment would be made in the Rent Restriction Acts. A matter which complicated the situation was that these cottages were often no longer in the occupation of farm workers but of the sons of former tenants who themselves worked in industry.

Mr. A. W. Crampton (Fellow) said that for the safety of Great Britain, and from the point of view of food supply, it was imperative that agriculture should be put on a sound footing. One of the surest steps towards keeping people on the land was to offer them a wage which, at any rate, carried with it some element of respectability, and the minimum agricultural wage of £3 a week now offered was a move in the right direction.

From the economic standpoint the matter was vital. In the past this country had relied upon its industry, with the result that agriculture had been badly neglected.

The lessons of the last war were soon unlearned. During that war, people cultivated allotments energetically and there was a greatly increased interest in production. But after the war the allotments were abandoned and no steps were taken to rehabilitate agricultural buildings so that the industry found itself in a more critical position than ever before.

In his view, this country had passed for ever its zenith as a trading country. Other countries were now rapidly learning to meet their own manufacturing needs and in the future it would not be possible to export the quantity of industrial goods which had been exported in the past. That being so, the future of agriculture became even more important.

The decline in population was another factor which made a prosperous agriculture and a steady supply of food necessary. The country could not assume that it was going to return to a state of great prosperity.

MR. CYRIL F. STONE (Member of Council) recommended members who might not have time to read the whole of the Scott Report, to study, in particular, Part V, the Summary of Recommendations. There was one omission from that summary which he regretted. Nothing was said about educating people to realise what agriculture really involved, how important it was, and how it could be maintained and improved.

Other committees had considered the question of rural education, and many attempts had been made to bring this subject into its rightful place. Apart from that, he considered the recommendations in the Report were excellent, and personally he thought the Institution should support them.

THE PRESIDENT said it was very difficult indeed to criticise the Report because it contained so many excellent recommendations. In reading through the Report he did select certain headings which he thought stood out in importance. The first was housing, which had already been mentioned. The housing situation was critical in the countryside both as to the quantity and quality of houses. Nothing like a sufficient number of houses existed to accommodate agricultural employees at the present time. Many urban dwellers appeared to think that slums were only situated in large cities. They were wrong. He could take members to many charming villages and show them blocks of houses which were as bad from the point of view of slums as anything in town areas. It was obvious that the countryside could not expect to retain first-class workmen unless the latter and their wives—which was an important point—were housed in a proper manner.

The question of water supply must also be tackled if agriculture were to come into its own. It was incredible what poor supplies of water there were in large country areas. Many villages were nearly waterless and water had to be carted over miles. When obtained it was not only inadequate but impure.

Electricity was also very essential, and he saw no reason why the country dweller should not have the same amenities as the townsman. It was annoying to the property owner to see cables in the immediate district which could not be tapped for his own supply. The reasons why this was so were well known, but electricity should be obtainable—and at a cheaper and less varying cost.

With regard to roads, many were deplorable. When there was bad access to a farm, a lower class of tenant came into it, and in turn he was unable to get the necessary labour because the women-folk would not face the roadways in winter. Transport had improved since the advent of the country bus, but there was still much room for future extension if the village woman were to have adequate shopping facilities.

The question of education had been considered by the Luxmoore Committee, and the Institution had submitted a joint Memorandum with the Land Agents' Society. There was no doubt that the rural child had not had the right type of education. He did not think the standard of rural schools had approached that of the near-by towns, and the country people were not slow in realizing where their children got a better education.

While none of them liked control, he feared they would have to put up with more in the future

in agricultural matters. Agriculture had been functioning exceedingly well under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, but he hoped the control would be limited in respect both to ownership and occupation. He had been glad to hear the Prime Minister say in his broadcast that the future of agriculture was being studied by the Government. That probably meant that the State might come to the assistance of the countryside.

The Scott Report said nothing about finance. It made a number of excellent recommendations but it did not suggest how the money was to be found. He felt confident, however, that if the agricultural industry were made prosperous—and it could only be made prosperous by a long-term policy—a good deal of capital would be attracted to it and many of the recommendations would be carried out by private enterprise.

Everyone was getting rather tired of planning, but it was essential that the powers that be should have a plan ready to put into operation—a policy which would carry the industry through a different set of circumstances, he trusted, from those which arose after the last war.

Mr. W. M. Balch (Fellow) said that the Scott Report was based on the assumption that agriculture should be maintained in a prosperous condition. A governing factor in the situation was that 80 per cent. of the people in this country lived in urban areas, and many among this urban population were likely to be much more impressed by the Minority Report of the Committee than by the Majority Report. For this reason he regretted that the Committee had not dealt with some of the arguments put forward in the Minority Report. It would be a great advantage to have an authoritative statement as to the exact position of agriculture from the economic point of view. What everyone who thought about the subject desired was that agriculture should be made prosperous without the sacrifice of other interests. It could be done, surely, given a people sufficiently agriculturally-minded.

He could have wished that the Report had dealt with the clearing up of past muddles as well as with the future. He had in mind past mistakes in development schemes which were evident in his own county of Essex. In that county much land had been reclaimed, but the land he had in mind ought never to have been developed in the way it had been. It should have been used for agricultural purposes; if it was to be farmed after the war, however, it called for proper equipment. He thought the houses and buildings necessary to enable such land to be farmed in future must be provided at national expense, although the farming of the land should revert to private enterprise.

No reference had been made to the Memorandum on Valuation and Rating signed by some members of the Committee. The Institution had never taken a trade union-like attitude to any proposal which was in the national interest. He would be interested to know how opposition to the proposals there put forward could be justified. The question of electricity and water supplies had been raised. Surely if agriculture were a vital part of our industrial prosperity the question of the cost of such supplies did not enter into the matter at all.

Attention to the question of the planning of country houses was needed. It had been suggested that a terrace of four houses was more attractive in appearance than a pair of semi-detached houses. He personally would object to living in the middle of such a terrace. Was it beyond the wit of architects to design a pair of semi-detached houses that were pleasing? The Committee had reported against tied cottages, and he was in agreement with that point of view.

Mr. A. de M. Chesterman (Professional Associate) said that the realisation of their ideals for the country-side depended on the prosperity of agriculture, and that in turn depended on two things—(*a*) the maintenance of the price level for agricultural commodities and (*b*) a long-term policy.

Mr. Arnold-Forster had wisely said that they must not try to inoculate the country-side with urban ideas.

At a recent town planning conference he had been amazed by a proposal that every village of over 500 inhabitants should be supplied with a cinema. He thought people should be educated in the other attractions of country life rather than that town attractions should be imported into the country.

With regard to tied cottages, one of his greatest difficulties in estate management had been to find adequate accommodation, not only for the farm labourer, but for other farm and estate workmen, such as the village blacksmith and the estate repairing staff, who were absolutely essential to country life. It was urgent that tied cottages should remain as such until the time when a large number of new houses were made available in the countryside.

Mr. H. E. Sherwin (Vice-President) proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Arnold-Forster and Mr. Rhys for the able way in which they had opened the discussion. In doing so he said that of all the Government reports which, during his forty years' professional experience, he had had to read and study, none had given more delightful study than that issued by the Scott Committee. He had come to the conclusion, after reading the Report, that it was most difficult to criticize.

In seconding the proposed vote of thanks, Mr. Robert Cobb (Past President), who was a member of the Scott Committee, emphasised that the views he was expressing were his own personal ones, and not those of the Committee.

Everyone was gradually becoming convinced that the maintenance of agriculture was necessary. Five assumptions underlay the Scott Report; namely, the establishment of a Central Planning Authority, the encouragement of industry and commerce, the maintenance of agriculture, the resuscitation of village and country life, and the preservation of amenities. These were all, to his mind, very important bases on which the Report was constructed. Without them it was not worth very much and with them it was worth a good deal.

There had been a suggestion that the Majority Report should have commented on the Minority Report. The fact was that the rest of the Committee did not see the Minority Report until their own Report was in print. There was a good deal of sympathy, he believed, with the Minority Report as against the Majority. The author of the Minority Report, Professor Dennison, was a man for whom he had much respect and admiration, but he was essentially an "economist," and on that word he had based the whole of his Report.

Generally speaking, Professor Dennison had a good deal of sympathy with the views of the Majority, but his Report was based on one idea, namely, "Here is an acre of land—what can I get out of it?" Of course, if one built on that acre of land a four-storey factory one would get a good deal out of it, and if one built a twenty-storey factory a good deal more, but no consideration was given to health or amenities. The author of the Minority Report said that, starting from an economic basis, it was clearly desirable that people should have as high a material standard of life as possible, and the speaker went on to say that he interpreted the "material" standard of life by the word "finance." The Majority went further and looked at the æsthetic, the physical and the health points of view. The Minority Report also said that a prior right should not be given to agriculture over other industries. But the Majority Report did not claim that it should be given a prior right. All it asked was for an equal right with other industries.

Mr. Balch had referred to the Additional Memorandum on Valuation and Rating. His view of that Memorandum—again entirely his own personal view—was that it was an attempt to reintroduce the principles of the Finance (1909–10) Act, 1910, and he had not supported it for that reason.

More than one speaker had asked how the recommendations of the Committee were to be financed. Many of the recommendations were for defence purposes. The Army, the Navy and the Air Force were financed by the country. Why should not agriculture to some extent also be financed. He did not suggest that money should be given to farmers to make a profit, but something might be given to secure a happy and contented countryside.

The word "education" was not used in the Report in the narrow sense. The Committee's idea of education was to acquaint the general public, and not only the general public, but politicians and certain Government departments as well, with the importance of agriculture to the country.

The Report had been called an idealistic one, and he agreed. There was not much in it to criticise because it did not reach any conclusions. Possibly that accounted for the small attendance that afternoon as compared with that at the discussion a month previously on the Uthwatt Report.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER, in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said that Mr. Chesterman had referred to what he had called the inoculation of rural areas with urban practices. He did not wish it to be thought that he was against the introduction of urban amenities into country areas.

He agreed entirely with the encouragement of village institutes and village halls, and he personally had no objection to the cinema. The village hall might be made into a real centre of community life.

Replying also to the vote of thanks, MR. RHYS said that although building in the country might, as suggested by Mr. Bell, come down to a question of cost, the great trouble was that in the country they were required to comply with urban by-laws. That was why a pair of houses looked wrong. If semi-detached houses could be built at a reasonable figure to comply with the by-laws they could be made to look as good as a block. As things were the money had to be schemed in such a way as to make the building comply with by-laws which had relevance to urban, but not to rural conditions. Thus a pair of houses stood up looking high and ugly, whereas with a block of houses the horizontal line offset the height of the building. Unless in post-war years some method of cheaper building could be evolved that difficulty would not be overcome, apart from modifying the by-laws to require less head space in the rooms.

Mr. Bell had also said that it all went back to a question of politics. That might be so, but the Scott Committee had said that they regarded many of their recommendations as being immediately practical and non-controversial, and consisting of things which could be done within five years.

When he had used the expression "satellite towns," he was, in fact, referring to new towns. He agreed that a satellite was that which moved around a bigger orbit.

On the question of village schemes, he entirely agreed with Mr. Arnold-Forster. The inner life of the countryside had died out within their own lifetimes, and with modern resources it should be possible to put something back to take its place. One of the reasons why villages had lost their former liveliness was because the squire was no longer "in possession," and his hall was no longer the focus of interesting activities. The local lord was probably not able now to keep his house going. If, therefore, the village could be cheered by such urban importations as cinemas he saw no objection.

The meeting then terminated.